

Dimensions

A publication for the Employees and Friends of VASDHS



April - May 2006

VASDHS Research ... improving medical care for people around the world

by Dr. Stephen Baird



Research is one of the core missions within the Veterans Health Administration and the San Diego VA has been a leader in VA research (based on the program and total funding) for many years. Our researchers have been recognized nationally and internationally for their significant findings in Shingles, diabetes, development of an oral drug for smallpox virus and alcohol addiction treatment, just to name a few. In addition, three of our researchers have received the Middleton Award, the highest VA medical research award, within the past nine years.



Within the VA San Diego Research Service, 223 investigators with 1,022 research projects and a budget of \$61.8 (FY 2005) are studying almost every aspect of human health that relates to our veteran patients. From cancer to infectious disease, from degeneration to regeneration, from physical to psychological disorders, from molecules to the whole person, we are looking at everything. A random sampling of ongoing projects and recent publications shows studies on growth factor gene therapy in Alzheimer's disease, axonal regeneration in spinal cord injury, and the practical problems of getting SCI patients back to work. Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging is being used to study cognitive dysfunction in Parkinson's disease and predictors of relapse in methamphetamine abusers.

Researchers in the treatment of schizophrenia are investigating the optimal combination of medication and psychotherapy to improve cognitive and social skills. Nursing projects include the effectiveness of mantram repetition in posttraumatic stress disorder, how nursing workflows in nursing homes, and rehabilitation of high-risk patients with heart failure. Depression in women that is related to the menstrual cycle, pregnancy, the post partum state, and menopause is being correlated with normal and abnormal melatonin rhythms. In autoimmune inflammatory disease a new animal model suggests that blocking the function of a molecule known as alpha 4 integrin

will reduce inflammation without killing the lymphocytes that are important for normal immune function. This approach influences the way white cells migrate rather than destroying them as many current anti-inflammatory therapies do. Studies on AIDS and malignant disease are going forward on the molecular, cellular, and clinical levels in many labs within the hospital and in collaboration with UCSD researchers.

The VA Middleton Award nationally selects one researcher each year to recognize their outstanding achievement in medical research. San Diego is honored to have three Middleton Award recipients. Larry R. Squire,

Continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

VASDHS Research shows how mantrams can even tackle post-traumatic stress disorder	2
The Joy of Soy	2
Employee Recognition Ceremony	3
Survey of Healthcare Experiences for Patients	5
National Volunteer Week	5
National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans	5
Celebration of Quality Program	5
Take Your Child to Work Day	5
VA Environmental Excellence Award	6
Hemodialysis Unit Open House	6
SANDAG Diamond Award 2005	6
Black History Month	6
VASDHS Outstanding Canteen Award	6

Everyone is invited to attend the 2nd Annual Research Poster Day on Thursday, May 4, 2006 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in the Multipurpose room in celebration of National Research Week. Investigators and researchers will be present to describe their current research activities (1 hr. Tempo credit).

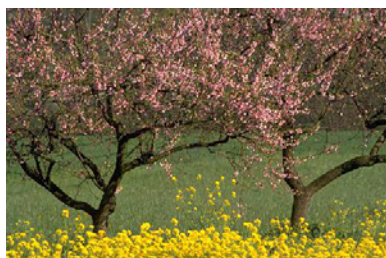
VASDHS Research shows how mantrams can even tackle post-traumatic stress disorder

by Cindy Butler

Repeating mantrams can help control the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, have a calming effect in traffic and even ease the boredom of exercise, according to a study by lead researcher Jill E Bormann, Ph.D., research nurse scientist at the Veterans Affairs San Diego Healthcare System in California in the latest **Journal of Advanced Nursing**.

83 percent of veterans and hospital staff who were surveyed after attending a five-week course told US researchers that they found

the technique – which involves silently and continuously repeating calming words or phrases throughout the day – useful



on a number of occasions.

Just under a quarter of these occasions (24 percent) related to traffic and work-related stress, 13 percent to insomnia and 12 percent to

unwanted thoughts. More than half (51 percent) related to emotional situations.

“Repeating the mantram seemed to stop post-traumatic stress disorder-type dreams that had occurred for 10 to 11 years” said a former veteran and one of the 66 people taking part in the survey.

“I have racing thoughts. I think about a ton of things – what I’m going to do about this and what I’m going to do about that – and then I start the mantram and it helps” added another.

A third found that using a mantram had an unexpectedly healthy side effect, commenting: “I use it sometimes when I’m on the treadmill at the gym. When I’m wishing that the time would go a little faster. And I’ll just start using my mantram and then I forget about it and it helps me exercise a little longer.”

The Rapid Relaxation class is offered for employees and veterans. For more information or to register for the next class, please call Robert West at ext. 2649.

VASDHS Research Service

Continued from page 1

Ph.D. received the award in 1994 for his significant discoveries regarding mechanisms of memory. Marc Schudkit, M.D. received the Middleton award in 1997 for his landmark study in which he defined the relationship between the intensity of alcohol’s effect and later alcoholism. This relationship has led to a search for genes related to alcoholism. HIV researcher, Douglas D. Richman, M.D, was our third Middleton recipient in 2002 for his studies of zidovudine, or zidithymidine (AZT), the first drug approved in the United States to treat HIV and he has also studied drug resistant strains of HIV and effectiveness of “drug cocktails” for treatment of HIV.

Our Research Service is one of the best-funded programs in the VA system in the nation. We can take justifiable pride in what we are accomplishing here on every level imaginable. This research benefits veterans and people around the world.

The Joy of Soy

by Ayo Oladunjoye, Dietetic Intern



Soy promotes healthy heart, healthy bones and prevents cancer. A rich source of protein, calcium and fiber, soy products are a healthy substitute for meats and some dairy products.

A diet with significant soy protein lowers cholesterol and triglycerides levels. Many soy products can be incorporated into meals, drinks or desserts. One glass of soymilk provides 8 grams of soy protein!!!



Try soy protein powder or products such as edamame, tofu, and tempeh in your diet and enjoy their health benefits.

Employee Recognition Ceremony

March 21, 2006



Excellence Awards

Karis Award

Christopher Almoite
La Kemba Hinton
Minna Huang
Merry Johnson
Miriam Keller
Michael Kilmer
Karin Kupka
Eleanor Ladrillono
John Rodriquez
Linda Shepherd
Robyn Stein
Katherine Wang

Excellence in Service

Jeanette Fields
Darlene Largoza
Joanne Metcalf
Ruthie McDaniel
John Raftery
Annie Troublefield

Excellence in Leadership

Martha Shively

Excellence in Teamwork:

The Cancer Registrars Team

Janet Armstrong
Marcia Djahanban Azad

The Coumadin Clinic Team

Christina Chan
Melissa Egan
Yelena Itkin
Soohyun (Cassie) Lee
Imelda Mina
Thanh (Nina) Nguyen
Edna Ng-Chen
Joann Ong
John Raftery
Sue Randolph
Jerry Sabio

Magnet Marketing and Communications Team

Lauraine Dwyer
Joan Fitzgerald
Therese Gibson
Katheryn Gideon
Jane Meisterling-Edens
Patricia Pelican
Darlene Santi-Rogers
Leslie Satz
Carolyn Stevens
Cathy Verkaaik

The Shingles Study Team

Danielle Beck
John Guatelli
Ruth Harbecke
Anne Kendall
Patricia McCook
Michael Oxman
Harold Stanley
Heather Williams



Employee Recognition Ceremony



Service Pins Awards

25 Years

Stanley Allen
Jean K. Andrews
Jim B. Ballesta
Diane R. Bennett
Jill D. Bond
Generoso E. Catalan
Carol A. Cooper
Leo R. Edilloran
Darryl L. Eldridge
John H. Gelles
Lisa Buck Gibbard
Antonio A. Ladrillono
Robert W. McGuffin
Karl A. Mosley

Theresa Q. Mulligan
Barbara L. Parry
Henry C. Powell
Carlos L. Roseta
Cynthia A. Sacchetti
Pedrito C. Sangalang
Joseph D. Schmidt
Martha J. Shively
Doreen E. Tate
Nilda E. Torres
H. Lee Vahlsing
Malvoncia Vance-McCauley
Juan J. Waterman
Sharon Lynn Webb

30 Years

Ricardo C. Alamillo
Renato A. Ariola
Ronald P. Bennett
Manolito M. Castillo
Conchita C. Daguio
Jose S. Dragon Jr.
Maria L. Dunn
Charlene Duren
Joyce E. Evans
Jeanette Fields
Robert M. Frye
Gregorio A. Fuerte Jr.
Mary Jo Griffin

Willard H. Howard
Clarissa L. King
Jose P. Magtoto
Roger B. Mirador
Karen K. Mooney
Nancy E. Muncy
Lamberto E. Nostrates
Eduardo O. Ordinario
William C. Peterson
Japsin T. Sayre
Larry R. Squire
Antonio F. Talucad
Adolfo B. Valdez

35 Years

Jose I. Alagar
Luis G. Barcas
Russell J. Cain
Leonard J. Deftos
Phillip H. Dozier
Sally M. Estacio

Rudy L. Martinez
Melvin J. Molo
Manuel B. Perez
Albert L. Tormoen
Rodel D. Valdoria

40 Years

Robert J. Burmeister
Alfred B. Gillard
Manuel M. Montemayor
Martin H. Ontiveros
Everett Shepard Jr.

45 Years

Eleuterio M. Padrique
Romeo E. Ramiro





Survey of Healthcare Experiences of Patients (SHEP)

by Jean Sobczak

Results are in from the most recent Inpatient and Outpatient Surveys of Healthcare Experiences of Patients (SHEP). Our patients continue to rate their Overall Quality of Care as exceptional! VASDHS' inpatients rate overall satisfaction 8% above the national average. Our outpatient overall satisfaction scores are 4% above the national average. Congratulations! More details available at the following web link: <http://vaww.san-diego.med.va.gov/Director/PSS/index.htm> or call Jean Sobczak at extension 3993 for more detailed information.

National Volunteer Week

by Lorelei Winn



As we celebrate National Volunteer week in April, it is fitting that we recognize our nation's premier volunteers – those who work with us each day in VA Voluntary Service.

During this 60th anniversary year, please remember to honor your volunteer and let them know just how much you appreciate what they do for you and our veterans. Say “thanks” to a volunteer today.



Celebration of Quality Program



VASDHS Emerging Leaders Graduates of 2005 with Gary Rossio (right)

VASDHS annual Celebration of Quality Program was held on February 27, 2006 in the Multipurpose Room to honor performance improvement activities, Goal Sharing Teams,

Advanced Access improvements, and all contributions toward quality health care for veterans.



National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans

VASDHS celebrated National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans during the week of February 12 – 18, 2006. This year's national salute spokesperson was racecar driver, Richard Petty.



Volunteers lined the main hallway with homemade valentines received from various school children and the VAVS Committee purchased heart shaped mylar balloons to distribute to all inpatients.

The small investment of time spent with veterans bring cheer to many who live far from family and friends, or who have no family at all. A visit, a smile, and a simple hello brighten the day for many veterans.



Take Your Child to Work Day

The Federal Women's Program will be sponsoring Take Your Child to Work Day on April 27, 2006. Children ages 9 - 15 are welcome to attend. Pre-registration is required. Register your child on April 3, 17 & 24 in the SCI Atrium from 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Contact person: Elizabeth Umscheid at umscheid.elizabeth@san-diego.med.va.gov.



“Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way”

- Booker T. Washington



Events & Awards



VA Environmental Excellence Award



(l-r) Randy Ritter, Bill Dias, and Tom Olson

The VA San Diego Healthcare System has been selected as a co-winner in VA's top environmental awards program in the category of Waste/Pollution Prevention. In addition, our project will be entered for competition in the 2006 White House Closing the Circle Awards Program.

Congratulations to the Facilities Management Team that completed this successful project.

Hemodialysis Unit Open House



Jaime Arceo, Medical Technician visits the new Nurses Station during the open house for the new Dialysis Unit

SANDAG 2005 Diamond Award

VASDHS was awarded a San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) 2005 Diamond Award presented at the 4th Annual "Survive the Drive" ceremony on February 23, 2006 at the Radisson Hotel in La Jolla.



(l-r) Stephanie Wright, Gary Rossio, Clara Ung, and Susan Rodriguez

VASDHS was recognized for the outstanding services we provide to our employees through our Transit Benefit Program. This is a team effort involving Human Resources Management, Facilities Management Transportation, Financial Resources Management Agent Cashier and

VASDHS employees who participate in the Transit Program.

VASDHS Hemodialysis Unit open house was held on February 8, 2006. This newly constructed and spacious unit is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment to deliver the best treatment for veteran patients.

FROM THE STAFF

Dimensions is a bimonthly publication of the VA San Diego Healthcare System. Your suggestions, contributions, and photos are most welcome. Submissions for the June - July 2006 issue are due May 4, 2006

Gary J. Rossio, CHE,
Director
Vacant

Associate Director
Jacqueline G. Parthemore, MD
Chief of Staff

Janet M. Jones, RN, Ed. D.
ACOS/Nursing & PCS

Editorial Board

Cindy Butler	Editor
Leila Rubio	Public Affairs
Jean Sobczak	Director's Office
Stephanie Wright	Human Resources
Jane Edens	Nursing
Carol Stoner	Pharmacy
Janet Peyton	Research
Terry O'Toole	Dental
Robert Harenski	Medicine
Marlene Carvajal	Special Emphasis
Erin Hudson	Nutrition & Food

Black History Month

The Black Affairs Program members hosted their annual Black History Month Celebration on February 28, 2006. Frank Ross, guest speaker from the VASDHS Transportation services inspired listeners with his speech and songs. Jimmie Young of FMS also shared his wonderful voice, followed by the performance of the Hinz Feet Dancers, directed by Rev. LaSandra Melton-Dolberry. The event was enjoyed by over 200 members.



VASDHS Outstanding Canteen Award

Congratulations to the San Diego Veterans Canteen Service (VCS) for their outstanding service to VASDHS! This is the 20th Outstanding Canteen Award they have received of the 25 years the award has been offered.



(l-r) Gary Rossio, Darryl Crippen, Veronica Alenazi, Pete Richardson, and Jim Donahoe